
Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales - Inspection of Children's Services in Cardiff

Reason for the Report

1. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the performance of Children's (Social) Services. This report provides a copy of the Inspection Report resulting from an inspection undertaken in January 2016 by the Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales. A copy of the Inspection Report is attached at **Appendix A**.

Issues

2. The Inspection was focused around the following five themes:
 - a) Theme 1: Providing direction.- page 9
 - b) Theme 2: Delivering Social Services - page 12.
 - c) Theme 3: Shaping Services Page - 16.
 - d) Theme 4: Access Arrangements page - 18.
 - e) Theme 5: Assessment Care Management- page 21.
3. The Inspection Report, published in March 2016, highlights a number of positives as well as areas for improvement. The report's recommendations for improvement are:

Providing Direction

- (i) Strong political and corporate support for Children's Services should be continued in order to achieve the Council's vision for children and young people in Cardiff, while continuing to manage the consistent high volume of demand on statutory services.

- (ii) The Council must strengthen the operational plans to support the effective co-ordination of the remodelling of Children's Services and its interface with the Early Help Strategy.
- (iii) The Council should assure itself that arrangements for accommodation and 'agile working' which it was planning to implement will support effective social work.

Delivering Social Services

- (iv) The Workforce Strategy should be fully implemented to maximise retention of staff and action taken to promote more timely recruitment of staff.
- (v) The Council should consider how it can increase the opportunities for staff to be engaged in the development and transformation of services; and for the voices of children and their families to be included in service planning.
- (vi) Staff must have the capacity to complete the training which has been identified to support their professional development.
- (vii) The quality assurance framework should be systematically implemented across Children's Services. This should include management oversight of the quality and frequency of supervision.

Shaping Services

- (viii) The Council must review its arrangements to ensure services can meet the needs of children and young people, particularly for those being subjected to domestic violence.
- (ix) A timely review of the effectiveness and the impact on outcomes for people of the remodelling of children's services and its interface with the Early Help Strategy should be included in the planning arrangements.

Access Arrangements

- (x) A range of user-friendly information should be developed and made easily accessible for families, children and young people not only with respect to signposting to preventative services but also how Children's Services carries out its work.
- (xi) The Council must develop more effective arrangements to ensure that the needs of children and young people are assessed if contacts and referrals about their well-being are repeated.
- (xii) The Council must work with partners to agree a shared understanding of the threshold for statutory services.
- (xiii) Careful consideration should be given to how the current effective interface between 'children's access point and the intake and assessment teams' is maintained when the remodelling of the service is implemented.
- (xiv) Arrangements for Children's Services staff to access information held on parents who are users of adult services should be reviewed.
- (xv) The 'out of hours' arrangements for the completion of 'welfare checks' on children and young people should be agreed with partner agencies.

Assessment Care Management

- (xvi) The quality of plans should be improved to be more outcome-focused and reflect the needs identified in the assessments.
- (xvii) Work to agree a model of risk assessment should be completed with a strong focus on consistency in risk management.

(xviii) More emphasis should be given to recording the views of children, young people and their families.

(xix) The Council should review the use of written agreements with families which should only be used within safeguarding or public law outline arrangements. Guidance for social workers and managers for their use should be developed.

Scope of Scrutiny

4. Members may wish to note the contents of the Inspection report and to make any recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families and Director of Social Services.

Way Forward

5. Members are invited to consider the information set out in the attached report and presentation from the inspector to identify any issues on which they would wish to receive further information.
6. Councillor Sue Lent, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families has been invited and may make a statement. Tony Young, Director of Social Services may wish to comment on the Inspection Report, and explain the actions being developed to address the areas for improvement.

Legal Implications

7. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend, but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to the

Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend, but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to consider the contents of the report attached at **Appendix A** and provide the Cabinet Member and Director of Social Services with any comments or concerns.

DAVID MARR

Interim Monitoring Officer

11 May 2016